

# Australian Organ and Tissue Authority Donation Project

## Brief report and recommendations to be incorporated into resource development phase

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### Project backgrounds

Cool Australia provides high-quality teaching tools, resources and professional development opportunities for educators across Australia. Education specialists partner with organisations to design and develop lesson plans and online courses that are mapped to the relevant year levels, learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities of the Australian Curriculum. Cool Australia covers a wide range of topics that up-skills educators, so they can critically engage and switch on young learners.

The Australian Organ and Tissue Authority Donation project is funded in partnership between Cool Australia and the Australian Organ and Tissue Authority to produce a lesson sequence that educates young people on the topic of Organ and Tissue Donation (OATD) and encourages young people to join the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation Register.

### Intentions of the report

This brief report incorporates:

- recommendations on how to use behaviour change approaches and attitudinal change to support young people to move from intention to action around this issue
- sensitive and safe approaches to discussing organ and tissue donation with young people
- general review of the draft outline of the lesson sequence planned (specific comments attached to draft outline directly)
- brief comments on OATD video resources.

### Background

Around 70% of Australians say they would like to be organ donors, but only 1 in 3 register. Among 16-25 year olds, fewer than 1 in 10 are registered donors. Registration makes a significant difference. 9 out of 10 families agree to a donation if a person has registered, while 4 out of 10 families agree to a donation if a person has not registered or discuss their wishes with their family.

## Barriers to registration

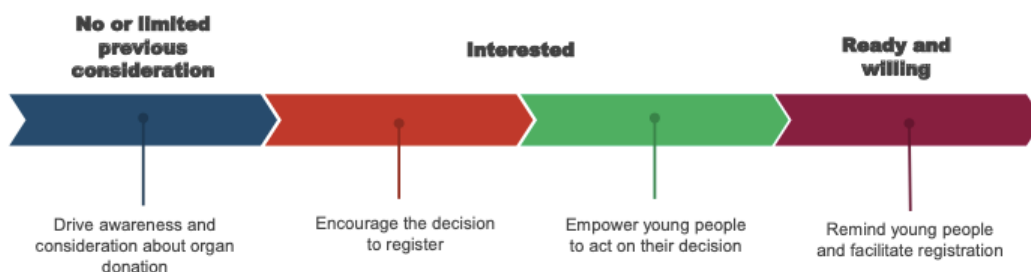
There are several barriers to registration that are easily addressed. These barriers include:

- The intention-action gap - many young people want to donate but “haven’t gotten around to it”.
- Psychological inertia – the human tendency towards inactivity continuing until a strong enough motivation or prompting to change occurs
- Belief that the process of registering will be complicated and time consuming or not knowing how to register.
- Lack of information – e.g. Is parental consent needed? What age can I register? Is registration needed or is it an opt-out system? Do I need to carry the organ donor card? Where do I find my Medicare number?
- Concerns about their body and the process - e.g. Will doctors try to keep me alive? What happens to a body after donation?
- Cultural and religious barriers
- Discomfort about discussing the donation decision with family

Although you don’t intend to use a traditional “mythbusting” approach, it is important to aim to address these barriers throughout the lesson sequence to maximise action, informed decision making and agency.

## A call to action: Helping young people move towards action

- Use a broad range of activities that will meet young people where they are at around OATD – some will be ready to register and others will never have considered this. Use a mix of awareness-building, education, opportunities for discussion and consideration of the issues, encouragement, empowering and prompting young people to act on their intention and facilitating registration.



*Figure 1 Findings from research into matching young people's stage of readiness with education and action (BETA report)*

- Each lesson should include concrete steps that can be taken to move towards action (not just registering, but also practising what to say to family, speaking with family, speaking to friends who have/haven't registered, getting more information etc). Waiting until a final lesson for this means many opportunities will be missed and momentum towards registering won't have built.
- Make concrete steps that can be taken as easy as possible. E.g. have QR codes on display, teacher email or share links to OATD registration page via email, Compass etc. Young people who intend to register have indicated they appreciate prompting to do so.
- Young people who have registered and already spoken with their family can still have important contributions and learning around this topic – finding out more as they often have further questions after registration, encouraging and supporting others, working towards awareness-building within their school, sports club, etc.
- In as many of the lessons as possible, include opportunities for young people to educate, debate, persuade, inform others. This will move them closer to action, as they will have the 'epiphany moment' themselves and be using a positive sense of agency, rather than passively engaging with the topic. This will also reduce the risk of backlash or inertia.
- Throughout the lesson sequence aim to address the most common barriers to registration, e.g. in small groups work through relatable barriers faced by young people in case-studies (mix of genders, culture and religious perspectives) and then presenting back to the class:
  - people who don't know how to register
  - people who want to find out more information before they make a decision
  - people who don't know how to talk to family about their decision
  - people who know their parents might be unsure about the decision etc
- Include examples, clips etc of other young people who have taken positive, concrete actions to help others, their communities and their world (it doesn't have to be on this topic, e.g. Malala Yousafzai, Greta Thunberg). This may fit particularly in the Biological Altruism and Time is Precious lessons.
- Include social media. Have young people create Tiktok videos, Instagram campaigns, memes, etc., that are focused on encouraging other young people to register. Share these with the class and give feedback. Consider other ways to incorporate social media throughout to make the material engaging.
- Consider including personal reflection questions at the end of each lesson to consolidate learning and embed intention to act e.g. What else would I like to know about this topic? What action am I going to take next? These questions can be answered by those who have already registered, those who are intending to, considering and those who don't intend to, as long as the questions are about learning and action, rather than registration.
- Consider practical ways to assist young people who want to, to register. Most young people won't have their own Medicare card, so will need to obtain this from their



- Include a sensitive content warning with each lesson and remind young people of support options available for them to access support if they need it. For some young people this topic may trigger grief from loved ones who have passed away. For others, this may trigger anxiety about the future, health-based anxiety or feelings of hopelessness, so teachers should be mindful of this.
- In any content that refers to death, there is an increased risk of disclosures of suicidal thoughts, so teachers should be made aware of this possibility. It is important to remind teachers that, if this occurs, this is an opportunity for young people to reach out and receive the support they need.

## Review of draft outline

Please refer to the comments made on the draft outline for the lesson sequence, and the suggestions above about embedding action within the lessons. A few general comments are below.

- 9 lessons may be too lengthy for some schools to implement in entirety, so consider having some “core lessons” that provide a thorough grounding and include options for concrete action steps.
- Build momentum by including specific, concrete steps towards action in each lesson in this sequence.
- Some teachers may skip the first (or multiple lessons), so if they do, it is important that there is a summary with the basic introduction, stats and facts, so that the sequence is grounded.

## AOTD video resources review

- The Call - does have a lack of diversity and the stories of donors and recipients may be a little harder for young people to connect with as the recipients are at different life stages. May be a little slow paced at times.
- Immortal Fans - does provide a unique, sports-based approach that may appeal to some young people. Video quality is poor at times. May be useful to consider if including an activity for young people to develop a social media campaign.
- Consider Jordan, Makayla, Phoebe and Nathan’s stories – these are quite likely to appeal to young people due to the younger age, relatability and informal language and approach. Also Barb’s message to recipients has a very positive message that is likely to appeal to young people.
- The two Organ Donation education videos are also great options for inclusion.

## Summary

A positive-focused lesson sequence exploring and encouraging young people to consider OATD is an important strategy to increase rates of donor registration among youth. Embedding principles of attitudinal change and a call to action across the entire lesson sequence will assist young people to take action that aligns with their values on this topic.

## References

The following sources were used in the preparation of this brief report and recommendations.

Behavioural Economics Team of the Australian Government (no date). *Using behavioural insights to improve organ and tissue donor registration among young adults. Short report for the Organ and Tissue Authority*

Donate Life resources and videos (various), <https://www.donatelife.gov.au>

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State of Victoria (2019). *Behavioural insights case study: Increasing organ donation registrations*, retrieved 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept 2021, <https://www.vic.gov.au/behavioural-insights-case-study-increasing-organ-donor-registrations>